

Call to Action: Improve Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates



The Minnesota health care community does a very good job of screening for colorectal cancer. Yet, if we could get more people appropriately screened, we could save hundreds of more lives annually in our state.

That's why ICSI is working collaboratively with the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the Minnesota Cancer Alliance to help raise the percentage of Minnesotans who are screened for colon cancer from the current level of 60% up to 80%. We are officially kicking off this endeavor in March—National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

As a broad collaborative of provider groups, we believe ICSI members can play an important role in getting people screened for colorectal cancer and reducing mortality in the state. You are the patient's most direct contact to make them understand why they need screening. A number of ICSI provider groups have created their own tools and are communicating within their organizations to increase appropriate screenings, and we encourage ICSI members and other provider groups to do so as well.

To help you in this initiative, ICSI has set up provider and patient sections on colorectal cancer screenings on this Web site. There are reproducible screening guide materials, and other information that providers can use with patients. Plus there are links to the American Cancer Society and other organizations that offer provider tool kits to help raise awareness and educate patients on the need for screenings (e.g., "The Primary Care Clinician's Evidence-Based Toolbox and Guide" at www.cancer.org/colonmd). The patient section on the ICSI Website is a good place to direct patients if your organization does not have much background information to share on the importance of screening.

MN Community Measurement

This is a timely start to bring more clinic and specialist focus on getting appropriate colorectal cancer screens done for their patients in light of new measurements coming from MN Community Measurement (MNCM). Its new "Colorectal Cancer Direct Data Submission" measurement period will start on July 1, 2010 and go through June 30, 2011. This measure will require primary care providers and those who perform colonoscopies to provide screening data on patients over the age of 50 starting in July 2011. MNCM's "Colonoscopy Quality and Colonoscopy Surveillance" measurement period will also start on July 1, 2010 and go through June 30, 2011. It applies only to providers who perform colonoscopies. They will be required to provide data on the outcomes of those tests starting in July 2011. Go to: <http://www.mncm.org>.